

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. An article carrier for supporting articles above an outer body surface of vehicle, said article carrier comprising:

a pair of support rails adapted to be secured to said outer body surface generally parallel to one another and in spaced apart relation to one another, each said support rail forming a channel;

at least one cross bar having a length sufficient to span between said support rails, said cross bar having a pair of opposing ends with a locking mechanism disposed at each one of said opposing ends, each said locking mechanism including:

a housing for engaging with said channel of an associated one of said support rails;

an actuating member having a manually engageable portion for facilitating engagement of said actuating member within at least one finger of an individual, a camming surface and an attachment portion, said actuating member being pivotally mounted on said housing such that said manually engageable portion can be rotated, thereby causing rotating of said actuating member without said actuating member interfering with said outer body surface;

a locking pin disposed for linear movement within said housing and including a cam follower surface for engaging with said camming surface of said actuating member, said camming surface operating to urge said locking pin

linearly out of engagement with said associated one of said support rails when said actuating member is moved to an unlocked position;

a biasing member for urging said locking pin into locking engagement with said associated one of said support rails when said actuating member is placed in a locked position;

an elongated member extending within said cross bar and coupled at a first end thereof to said attachment portion of one of said actuating members, and being operably coupled at a second end thereof to said locking pin of said actuating member at said opposing end of said cross bar; and

wherein movement of one of said actuating members from said locked to said unlocked positions causes a generally simultaneous movement of said locking pin at the other one of said actuating members, thereby disengaging both of said locking pins from their respective said support rails generally simultaneously.

2. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said cam follower surface of said locking pin comprises a post extending generally transversely of a longitudinal axis of said locking pin.

3. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said cam follower surface of said locking pin comprises a pair of posts extending in opposite directions from one another;

and wherein said camming surface of said actuating member comprises a pair of spaced apart curved surfaces for engaging with said pair of posts.

4. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said elongated member comprises first and second lengths; and

wherein said article carrier further comprises a central biasing element disposed within said cross bar and interposed between said first and second lengths of said elongated member to ensure that no slack develops between said first and second lengths.

5. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said elongated member comprises a cable.

6. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said elongated member comprises a cable having first and second lengths; and

wherein said article carrier further comprises a central biasing element interposed between said first and second lengths to form an intermediate section of said cable.

7. The article carrier of claim 1, wherein said locking pin includes an elongated slot; and